Labor and the Summit

Special On-the-Scene Report: The AFL-CIO Conference on World Affairs in New York April 19-20

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As Fearful As Adenauer Lest The Cold War Abate

New York

If the leaders of the AFL-CIO could afford a sense of humor, there would have been an irrepressible snort, at one passage in the speech with which Mr. George Meany, their president and leader, opened his AFL-CIO Conference on World Affairs here last Tuesday morning.

"The stakes in this crisis," Mr. Meany began, "are too high to entrust blindly to a few leaders at the Summit without the advice and consent of the people they represent." Such impeccable democracy, like charity, should begin at home. The members of the Executive Council, sitting in a well-behaved row at the rear of the dais, amid the gilt mirrors and under the ornate chandeliers of the Commodore Hotel's Century Room, must have wondered mutinously why Meany couldn't have consulted them even if Eisenhower and Khrushchov don't. For this conference was a Papa Knows Best operation in an organization notoriously afflicted with cult of personality. The stakes of the American worker in the issues of war and peace are also too high to be entrusted blindly to a few—a very few—leaders at the summit of the AFL-CIO. Mr. Meany and his foreign policy adviser, the ex-Communist leader Mr. Jay Lovestone, advised and consented only with Mr. David Dubinsky in arranging this conference. The CIO leaders, who do not see eye to eye with them, had about as much to do with picking the speakers and determining the general line as Molotov and Malenkov do with editing Khrushchov's proverbs.

A One-Sided Speakers List

Not a single speaker differed in essentials from Mr. Meany. No place was made on the program for any speaker who advocates relaxation of tension, cessation of nuclear testing, disarmament or a fresh look at relations with Communist China, much less co-existence, that dirty word. The general tone was well to the right of the Eisenhower Administration. Mr. Walter Reuther's adherents seemed to regard it as a signal victory that he had been able to slip Under Secretary of State Douglas Dillon, a notorious appeaser and Wall Street Leftist, in as speaker at a banquet *after* the conference was over, and even to make a speech himself, an eruption from below on which Mr. Meany had not counted. Though the declared purpose of the conference, in Mr. Meany's opening words, was "to weigh the facts, to analyze the problems", the set speeches offered more in the way of inflammation than information. The speeches are to be reprinted in a special Sunday supplement to the *New York Times* May 8 which will cost the labor movement somewhere between $50,000 and $60,000. The total bill for the conference, with its 500 delegates, from what used uncouthly to be called the pork-chop echelons of the labor movement, will probably be more than $100,000. It is hard to see what purpose will be served except to create public anxiety about "appeasement" on the eve of the Summit meeting, to feed Mr. Meany's sense of importance, and to sell Dr. Adenauer's hard line.

Not Even A Limited Nuclear War With Clean Bombs?

"I am not saying we should fight a war to bring about the reunification of Germany."

—Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, to the AFL-CIO World Affairs Conference, April 20.

Meany: "We Know the Score"

Mr. Meany, looking like a late Roman Emperor with his strong-beaked predatory face, launched the proceedings with warm self-commendation. After "a long and hard apprenticeship, the American trade union movement," which Mr. Meany identifies with himself, is "qualified to consider the issues of the current world crisis at this conference not as amateurs, but as full-fledged journeymen. We know the score. . . ." The score sounded like a posthumous composition by John Foster Dulles. "The threat to human survival and progress stems from one source and one source only—Soviet Russia." The Soviet's "offer of peaceful co-existence rings hollow." Russia's "entire national effort is concentrated on achieving superiority in aggressive military production." Khrushchov's disarmament offers are "alarming." Moscow is "desperately concentrating on producing the means to end freedom on earth." It is time "for the leaders of the world to tell the honest truth . . . no matter how painful it may be." "Smiling photographs and public handshakes can perpetrate a monstrous fraud." We must serve notice on Khrushchov "that the free world will proceed, at whatever cost, to achieve overwhelming superiority—militarily, economically and technologically. . . . Only then will the danger of war be reduced. . . . Only thus will it be possible to prevail upon the Soviet regime to accept an effective and enforceable disarmament program." In the meantime, until that happy day when we can dictate an unconditional surrender in the Kremlin and lead Khrushchov to the baptismal font, the free nations must not even "begin to retreat" at the Summit "on the future of Berlin or any other major issue."

But having marched stalwartly up the hill with Adenauer, Acheson and the shadow of Dulles, Meany rapidly marched down again. If the Russians are so untrustworthy, if our only safety lies in a race to overwhelming armament, if any retreat on any issue would be perilous, if agreement is only safe

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when we can dictate the terms, why negotiate? *How* negotiate? It was not only anti-climactic but confusing to have him end by saying that the trade union movement "firmly believes that our government should negotiate with Soviet Russia at the Summit and at every other level." It was bewildering to have him add that "every effort must be made to secure even limited reduction of armament" and that the goal must be "the banning of military atomic tests, an end to production of nuclear and other means of mass destruction and the genuine reduction of land, sea and air forces." Mr. Meany began to sound at the end as if he were a candidate for President. His conclusions seemed to cancel out his premises. How do you build up that overwhelming force needed to beat the Russians to their knees if in the meantime you negotiate "limited reduction of armament"? Or was this eye-wash?

By Coincidence, the Anniversary of Lexington

The opening remarks by George M. Harrison, as chairman of the AFL-CIO Committee on International Affairs, indicated that the conference was not stage-managed to give Eisenhower a cheery sendoff to Paris and Moscow. He spoke as if it had been planned as emotional mobilization for a period of stepped up world tension in which it was the labor movement's duty to risk its all. "We meet," he said, "on an historic day." The day turned out, by some Madison Avenue coincidence, to be the 185th anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord. "Too few Americans," he said, "are sufficiently aware" of the Communist threat, a remark which made one wonder where they had been since 1948. If freedom is to be "protected and promoted in 1960" the ordinary citizen will have to show "as much concern over freedom as our forefathers did when they fought the Revolutionary War." We want peace, of course, but we must "be on guard against wishful thinking and self-deception." American labor and the American people "do not want peace with chains and slavery." They want "peace and freedom, not the peace of the prison or the cemetery." In thus passing over the large number of Americans who merely wish to avoid mutual thermonuclear incineration with the Russians, Mr. Harrison hardly set the stage for sober thinking about negotiation. This railway brotherhood executive is a victim of discrimination. Chancellor Adenauer should have given him a medal, too, when he decorated Meany and Lovestone in Bonn last December.

Not all the speakers were as outspoken as Messrs. Meany and Harrison. The speaker to whom they assigned "Africa and the Near East" produced a speech in which no mention could be found either of South Africa or of the Arab-Israeli problem. Dr. Ernest C. Grigg, chief of the United Nations Community Development Group, managed to confine himself to generalizations and concluded safely that Africa and the Near East "are in the midst of a great social change." The one good speech at the conference was Professor Frank Tannenbaum's on Latin America. Here, however defensively, one could still find vestiges of the idealism and honest indignation which once marked the labor movement.

China Lobby Viewpoint

The worst of the first day's speeches was that of Prof. David N. Rowe of Yale, who was assigned the Far East. The AFL-CIO could hardly have picked a spokesman more satisfactory to the China Lobby than Prof. Rowe who was one of the star performers for the late Senator McCarran and his counsel Robert Morris in their attack on the Institute of Pacific Relations and Owen Lattimore. Prof. Rowe began with a defense of the nation-state system. He pointed to the "remarkable proliferation of nation-states" in the Far East and South Asia since the war and said this had occurred "at the very time when many of our supposedly most advanced thinkers had already concluded that nationalism was the root of all evil, and could only result in increasing strife between nations, to the detriment of us all." Prof. Rowe moved on from this bit of illumination to a favorite theme of the extreme right. Here he struck what was the most incongruous note of all at a labor conference. Prof. Rowe was arguing against reductions in military aid.

Chiang's Old Refrain

Prof. Rowe said "the chief agitators against measures of military defense against Communist aggression in the Far East seem to advocate "an unbalanced degree of trust in the efficacy of economic measures." (Such as higher wages and better living conditions?) "It is perhaps," Prof. Rowe continued, "a mark of the susceptibility in certain intellectual circles to the doctrines of primitive Marxism, that so many of our thinkers have been led to believe in the determining power of economic factors. To them," the Professor went on, perhaps in the absent-minded belief that he was addressing the National Association of Manufacturers, "the answers to problems of social and political stability, particularly in those areas which they describe as 'underdeveloped', are to be found in economic improvement." Mr. Meany himself is a primitive Marxist by

Even the Pentagon Would Find No Fault With This Labor Catechism on Foreign Policy

"How does the AFL-CIO view the Soviet campaign for 'co-existence and cultural relations'?

"The Kremlin leaders are now again turning to their so-called peaceful co-existence strategy for furthering their basic aims through encouraging the spread of neutralism, the relaxation of vigilance in the West, and the Communist infiltration of free labor organizations.

"What does the AFL-CIO consider as the test of democratization behind the Iron Curtain?

"The new Khrushchov course, which aims at extending and tightening the hold of the Communist Party on every walk of life, is away from liberalization and democratization. It is rather a move towards darker reaction.

"What is the AFL-CIO attitude towards the Soviet campaign for 'banning' the manufacture and tests of nuclear weapons?

"The Soviet rulers are supplementing their efforts to destroy NATO with a large-scale drive to end Western superiority in the nuclear field. While frantically speeding up the Soviet development and production of atomic and hydrogen weapons, the Communist dictators are propagandizing a ban on the manufacture and tests of H-bombs.

"Where does American labor stand on the question of national defense?

"An all-out effort must be made to regain any military advantage that has been lost to the Soviet Union . . . The country will support and can well afford to pay the sums needed to improve the nation's military posture.

—Q and A on American Labor and World Affairs, pamphlet distributed at last week's AFL-CIO Foreign Policy Meeting.

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Prof. Rowe's high philosophical standards. "No one should doubt," the professor added, "the social and political impact of economic development in the Far East, even if he must wonder just *what* [his italics] the impact really is. But one of the facts of life in that region today is that military security is an absolute prerequisite to economic development, and that until it can be locally supplied . . . it may have to be supplied from outside." This is Chiang Kai-shek's old doctrine, that guns must take precedence over butter, a point of view which facilitated his retirement from the mainland.

A Burst of Proletarian Snobbery

This being an era of destalinization, some semblance of democracy was given the proceedings by allowing a short question-and-discussion period after each speech. The leadership, however, astutely planned the *New York Times* supplement so that it will reproduce only the set speeches and avoid publicizing any demonstrations from the floor by anti-party elements. The first sign that disaffected forces were present came from the electrical workers—Carey's, not Emspak's. James Carey, president of the IUE, suggested that Russia might have real fears about hydrogen weapons and Al Hartnett, his secretary-treasurer, expressed the opinion that American labor should "learn to live" with the fact that Communism is in the world to stay for some time. When Mr. Hartnett went further and proposed that workers take part in cultural exchanges, he drew a burst of that temper for which Mr. Meany is famous. Mr. Meany replied angrily from the dais that he would have no part in "fraternization with jailers", adding in a surge of true blue proletarian feeling that such exchanges "might be all right for bankers", always an unreliable class element, "but not for the trade union movement."

Poor Leaderless India

Deviationism raised its head again in the wake of Prof. Tannenbaum's speech on Latin America which had discreetly omitted any reference to Castro. Serafino Romualdi, the AFL-CIO's leading authority on Latin American affairs, rose to correct the deficiency by saying that the greatest threat to Latin America came from the Communist conspiracy and urging united action by the Organization of American States to isolate Castro's Cuba. This led Victor Reuther of the Auto Workers to warn against "oversimplified slogans" which attribute all the difficulties in Latin America to Communism. Mr. Reuther said its troubles antedated the Russian Revolution and added that these had as much to do with the United Fruit Company as with Marxism-Leninism. He even hit below some belts among those present by asking why the labor movement had not done more against Batista and had found it "comfortable to consort with pro-Batista labor leaders." Mr. Reuther skilfully left unclear whether he was for or against the isolation of Cuba but his remark that Castro was "an excellent revolutionist but a lousy administrator" sounded almost like a testimonial in that gathering. It began to look as if Mr. Meany had made a mistake in allowing diverse flowers to contend. Fortunately, in the next discussion period, after Prof. Rowe's speech on the Far East as viewed from Taiwan, honest workers took the floor. Harry Goldberg, emissary to East Asia of Lovestone's Counter-Comintern, spoke about the beneficial political effects on India of Peking's take-over in Tibet. This moved Joseph Keenan of the IBEW to point out that India had no George Meany and to wonder why we couldn't get in there and give them some leadership.

The General Gets A Standing Ovation

The opening speaker at the second day session received a standing ovation when he finished. He was Major General J. B. Medaris, former commander of the U.S. Army Missile Agency. Either the leadership of the American labor movement has drifted a long way from its moorings, or it wasn't listening. For General Medaris belongs to the far right fringe of the military, who see little men gnawing their way through the woodwork everywhere. He began by warning them against the "subversive elements constantly at work among us" including the "equally dangerous subversion that saps our strength and our will to defend our way of life by knowingly or unknowingly fostering deficiences in our society that operate to impair our unity." This may not have been too clear but it was certainly far flung. His exposition of the military function displayed exactly the frame of mind which Latin America fears. Gen Medaris dwelt on the "provocation and assaults upon our sovereignty which have become almost daily occurrences in this period of burgeoning nationalism". He complained that "in our naive desire to make cause with those who seek independence . . . we seem to forget that American citizens must have the right to expect proper consideration for their property." This was Clausewitz repackaged by the United Fruit Company, but no one seemed to notice.

To support what used to be called dollar diplomacy, Gen. Medaris said we need "an assortment of resources" so as to permit "judicious and selective application of the means neces-

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Surprise Attack by Gen. Medaris on the "Numbers Racket" of the "Missile Gap"

"In my considered opinion, the combination of atomic striking power represented by the Strategic Air Command and other elements of the retaliatory capability satisfies a reasonable counter-strike requirement. Given any means by which 50 to 100 megatons of atomic destruction can be placed on the territory of a potential enemy it is obvious that the potential damage is so severe that he cannot afford to pay the price. Beyond that reasonable amount of assurance, and perhaps with even less, there is no further justification for continuing to pile up relatively useless destructive force . . .

"Three separate ICBM systems are simply too many. By what logic we continue to pursue two more beyond one already having operational capability, I do not understand. It appears that the fear engendered by the rattling of Soviet rockets has destroyed prudent judgment, for it is exclusively in this area of massive retaliation that such expensive duplication is permitted to exist. A prominent Senator recently estimated that our present stockpile of atomic weapons represented the equivalent of 10 tons of TNT for every man, woman and child on earth. We seem to be preparing not for retaliation but for obliteration. [Emphasis added.]

"Those who play the numbers racket by advocating more and more ICBMs without regard to the limited nature of the requirement, and with an apparent total disregard of the cost in time, labor, material and money, I believe are rendering a disservice to the nation."

—Maj. Gen. J. B. Medaris (Ret.) former commander of the U.S. Army Missile Agency, before the AFL-CIO, April 20.

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CIO Leaders Put Up Little Fight Against Meany and Lovestone

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sary to stop incipient trouble in its tracks." In his opinion "a capability for lightning intervention must exist . . . and it must be sufficient to meet and cope with any threat anywhere." He wants a mobile army corps for swift limited war wherever American interests are endangered. To finance this, he would —like the Army generally—cut down on funds for massive retaliation by the big bombers and big missiles of the Air Force. His attack on the "missile gap" [see box page 3] demolished the favorite stock in trade of the Man Who Mr. Harrison and Carey are supporting for President, Stuart Symington, but nobody seemed to notice that either. The audience rose as one for prolonged applause. When a lady delegate from the IUE in Canada piped up that there the labor movement was working for disarmament through negotiation, there was one handclap in a far corner. "Well, General," said Mr. Harrison, the chairman, "it seems you have done so good a job there is nothing left to say." When Jim Carey nevertheless said something about "weapons for peace", his remarks were coldly received.

A Testimonial from The Chancellor

The chairman then read a cablegram to Meany from Adenauer, hailing "the unswerving position of the American trade union movement". A fuller exposition of the Chancellor's views was left to the next speaker, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger of Harvard, best known for the theory of limited nuclear war he developed as research chief for the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. Peace, he said, was not an issue; everybody was for it. There were, he admitted, peculiar psychological and moral problems involved in the German question. The Soviets realized and were exploiting this. But our government was not doing service to peace in pretending that a change of tone by Moscow implied a change of policy. The President had been unwise in saying that nuclear war was unthinkable. All of us who have memories of World War II cannot be happy at the prospect of another war in Central Europe *but* . . . "I'm not saying that we should fight a war for the reunification of Germany." *But* Europe could not be defended without Germany. The hope of the world was to "tie Germany so closely to the Western community as to overcome "those hysterical and irrational tendencies which undoubtedly exist there." If the Germans felt abandoned in their hour of need, they would resume their old game of playing East and West against each other. To this theme was added Bonn's familiar doctrine on the dangers of relaxation and disengagement. As in 1955, when we thought the cold war had ended, a general atmosphere of good will was demoralizing to the free world. "I'm not asking for continuation of the cold war," said this bright young man in his pompous bass voice with the faintly Germanic accent, "but for responsibility in negotiation." If we had built up a strong enough force in Europe, if NATO had done its duty, there would never have been a threat to Berlin. This is how Adenauer sees the world, a world in which Germany is the victim of Soviet machination and Western weakness. This presentation was the climax of the pre-summit labor conference as planned by Mr. Meany.

What Adenauer Fears

It was disappointing that when Walter Reuther rose to speak after Dr. Kissinger, he endorsed this Germano-centric view of the world so warmly. That the Germans have reason to fear the Russians is true. It is also true that the Russians have reason to fear the Germans, as do the rest of us. Amid all Mr. Reuther's glittering liberal generalizations, there was no mention of the fears aroused at the prospect of a new Wehrmacht armed with nuclear weapons. Like Dr. Kissinger, Mr. Reuther insisted that the Russians could not really be afraid of reunification because there was "no difference of opinion" on guarantees that Germany would never again disturb the peace of the world. This is untrue; the insistence on a rearmed Germany and on a Germany rearmed with nuclear weapons makes any treaty guarantees scraps of paper. The German fear is that East and West may be by-passing the difficult German problem in the search for peace. This is why Adenauer fears the Summit. The real question is whether Germany shall have priority, as a condition for a world settlement, or whether Germany is to be left divided until in a better atmosphere not only Germany but Europe may be united again. The labor movement has been lined up on the German side by Meany's belligerence and Reuther's weakness.

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